

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0527

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: UDF TO BOYCOTT BY-ELECTIONS AS WELL AS ASSEMBLIES

1. PRESS JULY 30 REPORTS THAT UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF) CENTRAL ACTION COMMITTEE (CAC) DECIDED IN LAHORE MEETING JULY 29 TO BOYCOTT ALL NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTIONS UNTIL "FAIR AND FREE ELECTIONS" WERE RESTORED. COMMITTEE ALSO DECIDED THAT MEMBERS AFFILIATED WITH UDF SHOULD CONTINUE TO BOYCOTT ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE SESSIONS.

2. CAC REPORTEDLY REVIEWED NATIONAL POLITICAL SITUATION AND "GOP'S INDIFFERENT ATTITUDE TOWARD (OPPOSITION'S) BOYCOTT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE SESSIONS." FAILING TO FIND ANY "FACE-SAVING DEVICE TO END BOYCOTT," CAC DECLARED, UDF HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CONTINUE BOYCOTT.

3. AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL, CAC REPORTED TO BE "PERTURBED" OVER RECENT DECISIONS BY OPPOSITION PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES IN PUNJAB AND SIND TO END THEIR BOYCOTTS OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES. COMMITTEE APPOINTED SEVEN-MAN SUB-COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE TO COORDINATE THE PROTEST ACTIONS OF OPPOSITION

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PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS IN ALL FOUR PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES.

(SUB-COMMITTEE, HEADED BY MAULANA SHAH AHMAD NOORANI, JUP (RECENTLY ELECTED SENATOR FROM SIND), INCLUDES MAULANA MUFTI MAHMUD, MNA FROM NWFP, AND SENATOR KHWAJA MUHAMMAD SAFDAR OF PUNJAB.) CAC SPOKESMAN NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF UDF AND PRESIDENT OF THE PAKISTAN JAMHOORI PARTY (PJP), WAS UNABLE TO EXPLAIN TO NEWSMEN WHAT FORM OF "UNITED AND EFFECTIVE PROTEST" THE PUNJAB AND SIND OPPOSITION GROUPS WOULD TAKE AFTER ENDING THEIR BOYCOTTS, OR WHETHER THEY COULD BE PERSUADED TO RESUME BOYCOTTING PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY SESSIONS AGAIN.

4. VENACULAR PRESS, COVERING CAC MEETING MORE EXTENSIVELY THAN ENGLISH PAPERS, REPORTS SHARP SPLIT IN UDF OVER WHETHER TO CONTEST BY-ELECTION FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT VACATED BY MAULANA SHAH AHMAD NOORANI IN SIND (FOR ELECTION TO SENATE). NOORANI, PRESIDENT OF JAMIAT-UL-ULEMA-E-PAKISTAN, AND CHAUDRY REHMAT ELAHI, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE JAMAATI-I-ISLAMI, REPORTEDLY EXCHANGED HOT WORDS OVER THIS ISSUE IN CAC MEETING. COMMITTEE COULD ONLY RESPOND WITH LAME HOPE THAT "ALL PARTIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN OPPOSITION WHO HAD COOPERATED WITH UDF IN PAST WOULD ABIDE BY BOYCOTT DECISION."

5. COMMENT: UDF, DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN UNITY, MAY BE FACED WITH DILEMMA OF MEMBERS TAKING PART IN ELECTIONS IN ONE PROVINCE AND BOYCOTTING THEM ELSEWHERE. ON OTHER HAND, IF BOYCOTT WERE TO STICK, IT MIGHT MEAN FORFEITING CHANCE TO WIN BY-ELECTION OR TWO IN SIND AND PUNJAB, LEAVING PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL POLITICS ENTIRELY IN PPP HANDS. AS USUAL, UDF CAN NOT SEEM TO GET IT ALL TOGETHER.
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